

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPO #0102/01 0422016
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 112015Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0184
INFO RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000102

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: AMGT ASIG PHUM NS
SUBJECT: Suriname Response: OIG Review of Impact of Required Reporting

REF: STATE 9541

¶1. (U) Post is pleased to provide a response keyed to Reftel.

¶2. (SBU)

a. The Human Rights Report takes the most time and attention from State personnel at the Embassy.

b. The Political/Economic Section is responsible for gathering information and preparing the following congressionally mandated reports: Human Rights Report; International Narcotics Control Strategy Report: Part I narcotics, Part II money laundering; Country Terrorism Report; End Use Monitoring Report; Child Labor Report; Trafficking in Persons Report; and Religious Freedom Report.

c. The Political/Economic Chief and Political Assistant work on the following reports: Human Rights Report; International Narcotics Control Strategy Report: Part I narcotics, Part II money laundering; Country Terrorism Report; End Use Monitoring Report; Child Labor Report; and the Trafficking in Persons Report. In 2009 the Economic Officer/Public Diplomacy Officer and Commercial Assistant did the Religious Freedom Report. The Deputy Chief of Mission and Ambassador clear and approve the reports.

d.

Human Rights Report:

Pol/Econ Chief: 90 hours. Pol Asst: 590 hours.

International Narcotics Strategy Reports (I & II):

Pol/Econ Chief: 45 hours. Pol Asst: 60 hours.

Country Terrorism Report:

Pol/Econ Chief: 5 hours. Pol Asst: 10 hours.

End Use Monitoring Report:

Pol/Econ Chief: 65 hours. Pol Asst: 300 hours.

Child Labor Report:

Pol/Econ Chief: 15 hours and counting. Pol Asst: 120 hours and counting. (Report in drafting progress)

Trafficking in Persons Report

Pol/Econ Chief: 15 hours and counting. Pol Asst: 30 hours and counting (Report in drafting process)

Religious Freedom Report:

Pol/Econ Off: 7 hours. Commercial Ass: 10 hours.

The above time includes all aspects of the report process from scheduling meetings, requesting information by telephone or email, attending meetings, drafting, to providing courtesy copies to the government, to public diplomacy roll-out.

This represents 21% of the Pol/Econ Chief's time and 99% of the Pol Asst's time during the time periods that we work on annual reports (August-February).

This represents 29% of the human resources in the combined Political/Economic/Public Diplomacy/Commercial Section.

This represents 2% of the total mission human resources (including interagency, local and American staff)

e.

The required reporting, as it is currently being produced, is significantly diverting resources from other mission goals during the months August through February. This is an almost full-time endeavor for the Political Assistant from August through February each year.

f.

The Embassy is evaluating whether its budget can support another Pol/Econ LES position.

g.

The information gathering process consumes the most resources due to the operating environment in Suriname. There is limited expertise amongst interlocutors and deficient records keeping, which makes the collection of statistics a long and cumbersome process. Furthermore, information is fragmented among the seventeen ministries and numerous commissions and non-governmental organizations, which requires reaching out in a large number of directions in order to collect the required information. Finally, Surinamese interlocutors can be quite unresponsive to telephone, letter, and email requests for information, which necessitates a large number of face-to-face meetings in order to elicit the information from them.

h.

Department instructions on drafts are clear and helpful. When the format or procedures of reporting are changed from one year to the next it is more burdensome: when many new questions are added, when the narrative changes order, or when we are requested to answer Q&A when it has been in narrative form (or vice versa). In the past three years the following reports have had changes from year to year: International Narcotics Strategy Report Part II (format), Country Terrorism Report (submission method), End Use Monitoring Report (format), and Child Labor Report (format). Adapting yearly to these new procedures takes additional time of report preparers. The coinciding due dates that have not been

coordinated by requesting offices, especially in cases where drafts go through a negotiation process with Washington, can also cause "report fatigue" and be wearing both on Post staff but also on Embassy contacts that may be involved on several issues for different reports (examples -- January 29 End Use Monitoring Report deadline; February 1 Child Labor Report Deadline; February 5 final version of Human Rights Report submitted.)

i.

The annual report consists of more than 90% of the embassy's overall reporting on these issues during the year, greatly limiting the section's ability to generate Post-specific reporting not related to these topics. Since the annual report cycle covers six months of the year, we devote the other six months to covering other topics not included in the annual congressionally mandated reporting, fulfilling other reporting requirements (Investment Climate Report, Country Commercial Guide), and organizing public diplomacy and trade promotion events.

j.

The Drug Enforcement Administration provides input to the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report during the clearance process but the compiling and editing is done by the Political/Economic Section.

¶3. (U) The officer with primary responsibility for preparing congressionally mandated reports is currently Pol/Econ Chief Geneve Menscher; menscherge@state.gov.

NAY